



# VERGHESE KURIEN

THE MAN WITH THE 'BILLION-LITRE' IDEA

Vol. 845





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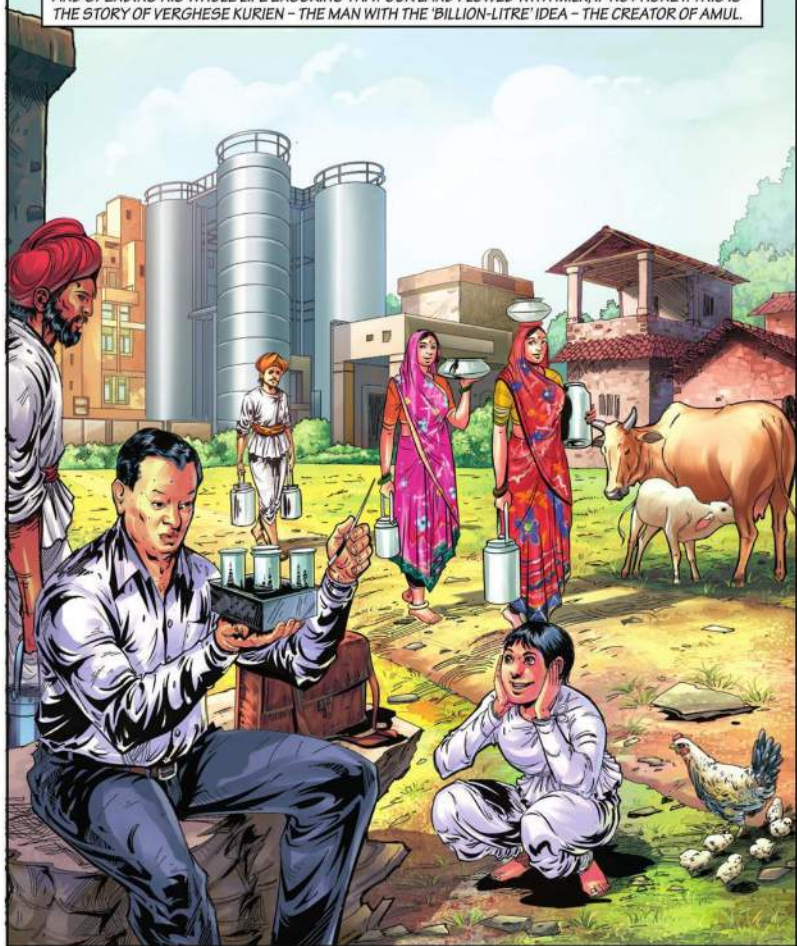
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## VERGHESE KURIEN

WHAT DOES IT TAKE FOR A MILK-DEFICIENT COUNTRY TO BECOME THE WORLD'S LARGEST MILK PRODUCER? NOTHING SHORT OF A REVOLUTION. AND REVOLUTIONS DO NOT ALWAYS START WITH A BANG. SOME ARE BORN QUIETLY, OFTEN IN THE UNLIKELY OF PLACES, SPEARHEADED BY THE UNLIKELY OF PEOPLE.

INDIA'S MILK REVOLUTION BEGAN IN A SMALL, DUSTY TOWN OF GUJARAT, SPARKED OFF BY A MAN WHO HAD ABSOLUTELY NO INTEREST IN DAIRYING AND HAD, IN FACT, LANDED THERE BY A SIMPLE TWIST OF FATE. HE ENDED UP DEDICATING HIS BEST YEARS TO THE CAUSE OF GUJARAT'S POOR MILK FARMERS AND SPENDING HIS WHOLE LIFE ENSURING THAT OUR LAND FLOWED WITH MILK, IF NOT HONEY. THIS IS THE STORY OF VERGHESE KURIEN - THE MAN WITH THE 'BILLION-LITRE' IDEA - THE CREATOR OF AMUL.





OUR STORY, THOUGH, BEGINS FAR AWAY FROM GUJARAT. ON NOVEMBER 26, 1921, VERGHESE KURIEN WAS BORN TO A WEALTHY SYRIAN CHRISTIAN FAMILY IN KOZHIKODE, KERALA.



BLESSED WITH A REMARKABLE MEMORY, KURIEN EXCELLED IN ACADEMICS AS WELL AS IN SPORTS...



...AND JOINED COLLEGE AT FOURTEEN.

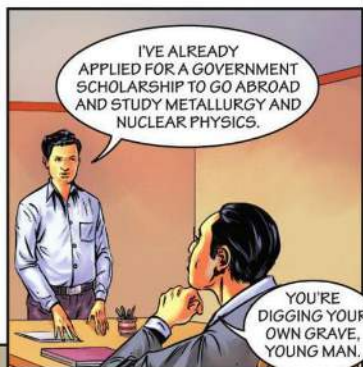


AFTER A DEGREE IN ENGINEERING, KURIEN STARTED AN APPRENTICESHIP WITH THE TATA IRON AND STEEL COMPANY (TISCO). HIS UNCLE, JOHN MATHAI, WAS THE DIRECTOR THERE. ONE DAY -



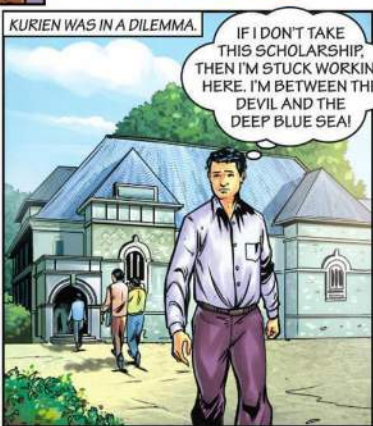
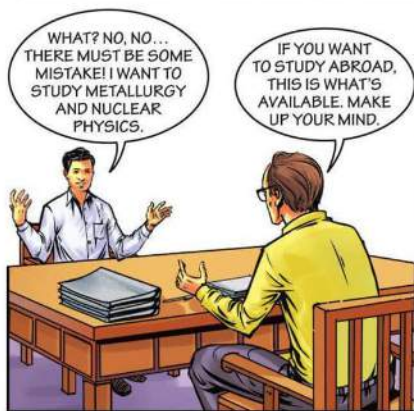
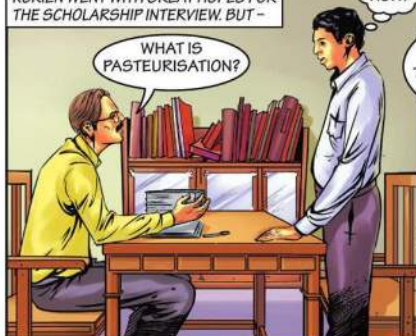
FROM THAT DAY ONWARDS -





KURIEN WENT WITH GREAT HOPES FOR THE SCHOLARSHIP INTERVIEW. BUT -

HUH?





DESPERATE TO GET AWAY, KURIEN WENT TO THE U.S. TO STUDY DAIRY ENGINEERING AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY.

I'M VERGEHESE KURIEN.

PLEASUED TO MEET YOU. I'M MANSOOR.

THE EASY-MANNERED KURIEN SOON MADE A LARGE CIRCLE OF FRIENDS WITH HIS SPARKLING WIT AND BUOYANT HUMOUR.

SINCE KURIEN HAD GONE ABROAD ON A GOVERNMENT SCHOLARSHIP, HE HAD TO GET IN TOUCH WITH THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION IN DELHI.

AH, SO YOU'RE KURIEN. WE ALREADY HAVE A JOB WAITING FOR YOU IN ANAND.

ANAND? UH... WHERE IS THAT EXACTLY?

IN GUJARAT.

THE DISAPPOINTED KURIEN HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO PACK HIS BAGS.

I HAD DREAMT OF AN EXCITING, CHALLENGING JOB IN A BIG, FAST-PACED CITY, AND HERE I AM, OFF TO A PLACE THAT'S BARELY VISIBLE ON A MAP!

LUCKILY FOR HIM, HE FOUND THAT HE COULD MAJOR IN NUCLEAR PHYSICS AND METALLURGY AFTER ALL.

I SHOULD TAKE A FEW TOKEN COURSES IN DAIRY ENGINEERING AS WELL, JUST TO KEEP THE GOVERNMENT HAPPY.

THE YEARS PASSED IN A WINK AND SOON IT WAS TIME TO RETURN HOME.

KEEP IN TOUCH, DALAYA. TAKE CARE, MEDORA!

I'M SORRY, SIR, BUT THE DEAN OF ENGINEERING AT MICHIGAN HAS GOT ME A JOB IN CALCUTTA\*.

WHAT?! THE GOVERNMENT HAS PAID FOR YOUR STUDIES ABROAD. YOU HAVE TO ACCEPT THE JOB YOU'RE GIVEN, OR ELSE WE CAN SUE YOU!

UNKNOWN TO KURIEN, A FLEDGLING MILK COOPERATIVE SOCIETY WAS STRUGGLING TO TAKE FLIGHT IN THE KAIRA DISTRICT, WHERE ANAND WAS. ITS STORY HAD STARTED IN BOMBAY\*.



IN 1942, A NUMBER OF BRITISH OFFICERS STATIONED IN BOMBAY HAD FALLEN SERIOUSLY ILL. AN INVESTIGATION HAD REVEALED THAT IT HAD BEEN BECAUSE OF THE MILK.

THE REPORT SAYS THAT EVEN THE SEWAGE WATER IN LONDON IS LESS POLLUTED!

THE GOVERNMENT HAD SET UP A DEPARTMENT AND APPOINTED A MILK COMMISSIONER. MILK WAS TO BE TRANSPORTED FROM THE NEARBY DISTRICT OF KAIRA.

THE MILK FARMERS OF KAIRA HAD BEEN IN THE CLUTCHES OF A MAN CALLED PESTONJI EDULJI DALAL WHO HAD TAKEN ON THE NAME POLSON. HE WOULD BUY THE MILK AT LOW PRICES AND SELL IT FOR DOUBLE THE AMOUNT.

THIS DOESN'T HAVE ENOUGH FAT. I CAN'T GIVE YOU MORE THAN AN ANNA\*.

THAT IS TOO LITTLE!



POLSON HAD AGREED TO SUPPLY MILK TO BOMBAY ON A FEW CONDITIONS.

THE GOVERNMENT MUST FINANCE ALL THE MACHINERY, PAY ME A PROCESSING FEE AND MAKE ME THE SOLE SUPPLIER.

THE ARRANGEMENT SUITED EVERYONE, EXCEPT FOR THE POOR FARMERS. WHILE THE ACTUAL PRICE OF MILK WAS RS 2 PER LITRE, THE FARMERS WOULD GET 2 ANNAS!

TRIBHUVANDAS PATEL, A LOCAL POLITICAL LEADER, HAD MET WITH SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL WITH THE FARMERS' PROBLEMS.

I SEE ONLY ONE WAY OUT OF THIS. GET TOGETHER AND FORM A COOPERATIVE SOCIETY. CUT THE MIDDLEMAN OUT.

WE ARE READY, AS LONG AS WE HAVE YOUR SUPPORT, SARDAR.

I WILL SEND MORARJIBHAI\*\* TO GUIDE YOU.



\*NOW MUMBAI  
^ 16 ANNA = 1 RUPEE

\*\*MORARJI DESAI, WHO WENT ON TO BECOME THE 4TH PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA



IN A MEETING ATTENDED BY HUNDREDS OF IMPASSIONED VILLAGERS -

EACH VILLAGE IN THE KAIRA DISTRICT WILL HAVE A COOPERATIVE SOCIETY, WITH THE DISTRICT UNION AT ANAND. BOMBAY MUST BUY MILK FROM US DIRECTLY.

IF THEY REFUSE, WE WILL POUR AWAY OUR MILK!



AND SO, DURING A TWO-WEEK MILK STRIKE IN KAIRA, THE FARMERS HAD POURED AWAY THEIR MILK BUT NOT A SINGLE DROP HAD BEEN GIVEN TO POLSON'S BUSINESS, AS WELL AS THE BOMBAY MILK SCHEME, HAD COLLAPSED.



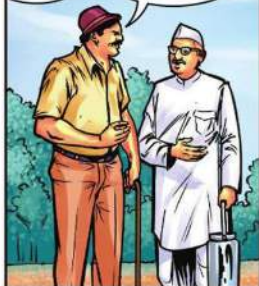
THAT WAS WHEN DARAKHURDY, A DAIRYMAN, HAD VISITED ANAND WITH THE MILK COMMISSIONER TO FIND OUT WHAT HAD BEEN GOING ON.

TRIBHUVANDAS HAD ONLY ONE ANSWER.

SEEING THAT THE FARMERS WOULD NOT BUDGE -

YOU HAVE TO STOP THIS NONSENSE RIGHT NOW.

YOU KNOW THE GOVERNMENT CAN TAKE ACTION AGAINST YOU FOR THIS.



HEY!



SIR, LET THEM FORM THE COOPERATIVE. IT'S NOT GOING TO LAST. HOW CAN THESE ILLITERATE VILLAGERS RUN A BUSINESS?

FINE, LET THEM FORM THEIR DASHED COOPERATIVE!





AN OVERJOYED TRIBHUVANDAS HAD STARTED TRAVELLING FROM VILLAGE TO VILLAGE, URGING FARMERS TO FORM COOPERATIVES.

ALONE, YOU  
ARE POWERLESS  
AGAINST THE  
CRAFTY  
MIDDLEMEN.

TOGETHER,  
YOU CAN CRUSH  
THEM AND SEIZE  
THE PROFITS OF  
YOUR LABOUR.

CAN A HARIJAN  
LIKE ME BECOME  
A MEMBER OF THE  
COOPERATIVE?

WHY, OF COURSE!  
YOUR MILK AND SETHJI'S  
MILK WILL GO IN THE SAME  
CONTAINER. MILK KNOWS NO  
CASTE, NO RELIGION,  
NO BOUNDARY.

THE END OF THE  
YEAR 1946 SAW  
FIVE COOPERATIVES  
EMERGE FROM THE  
KAIRA DISTRICT.  
THE KAIRA DISTRICT  
COOPERATIVE  
MILK PRODUCERS'  
UNION LIMITED  
(K.D.C.M.P.U.L.) WAS  
REGISTERED.

1947 WAS THE YEAR INDIA  
Arose TO FREEDOM - BRUISED,  
EXHAUSTED, BUT HOPEFUL. THE  
NEW GOVERNMENT GAVE THE  
FARMERS OF KAIRA PART OF AN  
OLD, RUN-DOWN DAIRY THAT  
HAD BEEN IN ANAND  
SINCE 1914.

THE DAIRY WAS IN A TERRIBLE  
CONDITION, A FIRST WORLD  
WAR RELIC WITH ANCIENT  
MACHINERY.

MORARJI DESAI HAD CHOSEN A CHAIRMAN.

TRIBHUVANDAS,  
YOU'RE THE ONLY MAN  
HERE WHO DOESN'T  
WANT TO BE CHAIRMAN,  
WHICH MAKES YOU THE  
BEST PERSON FOR  
THE JOB!

BUT RUNNING A DAIRY MEANT OPERATING MACHINERY.

I DON'T THINK  
THIS IS THE WAY  
THE MACHINE  
WORKS.

WHO  
WILL HELP  
US?

THE SOLUTION TO THE FARMERS' PROBLEMS CAME ON WHAT  
IS CONSIDERED TO BE AN UNLUCKY DAY WORLD OVER, FRIDAY  
THE 13TH. BUT FOR THE FARMERS OF GUJARAT, IT WAS A  
DAY THAT WOULD CHANGE THE WINDS OF THEIR FORTUNE.  
THAT WAS THE DAY VERGHESE KURIEN ARRIVED IN ANAND.

WHEN THE STEAM TRAIN CHUGGED INTO THE TINY, DILAPIDATED STATION OF THE SMALL TOWN ON MAY 13, 1949 -



THERE WERE OTHER PROBLEMS TOO.



KURIEN HAD TO SETTLE FOR THE GARAGE OF THE DAIRY HE HAD COME TO WORK IN.



HE COVERED UP THE HUGE HOLE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROOM...



...AND MADE WINDOWS IN THE WALLS.





AFTER A LITTLE WORK WITH THREE CORRUGATED IRON SHEETS -



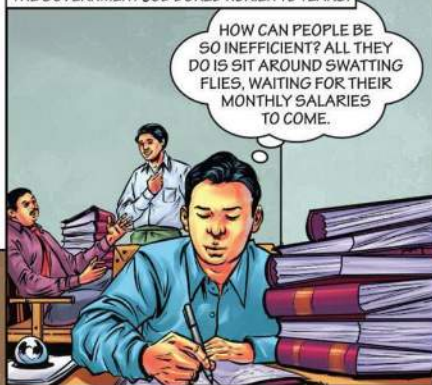
AHA! THAT TAKES CARE OF THE BATHROOM SITUATION.

KURIEN'S ELDER BROTHER SENT HIM A TRAINED COOK-BUTLER OUT OF SYMPATHY FOR HIS SITUATION.



IT MADE FOR A FUNNY PICTURE - THE COOK IN THE SPOTLESS WHITE UNIFORM, SERVING KURIEN AT A SHAKY THOUGH BEAUTIFULLY SET TABLE IN A CORNER OF THE OLD GARAGE!

THE GOVERNMENT JOB BORED KURIEN TO TEARS.



HOW CAN PEOPLE BE SO INEFFICIENT? ALL THEY DO IS SIT AROUND SWATTING FLIES, WAITING FOR THEIR MONTHLY SALARIES TO COME.

EVERY MONTH, WITHOUT FAIL, KURIEN WOULD WRITE TO THE GOVERNMENT.



PLEASE ACCEPT MY RESIGNATION

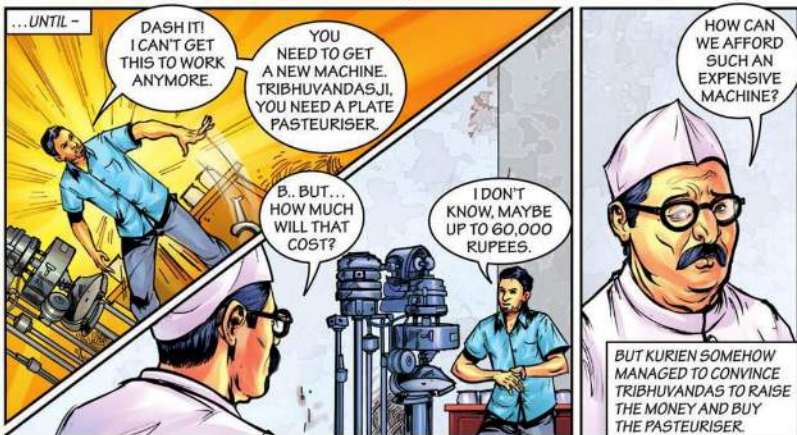
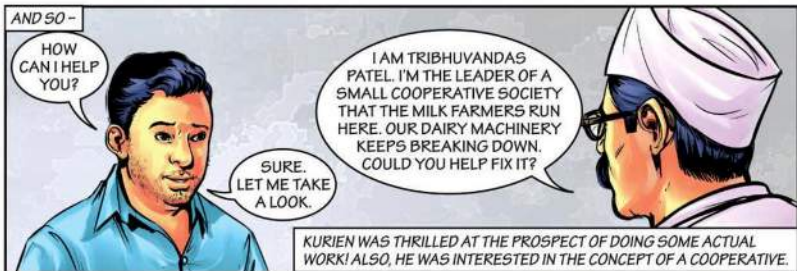
MEANWHILE, THE COOPERATIVE WAS CONTINUING TO FUNCTION BADLY.



NOT AGAIN! THIS IS THE THIRD TIME THE MACHINE HAS BROKEN DOWN THIS WEEK.

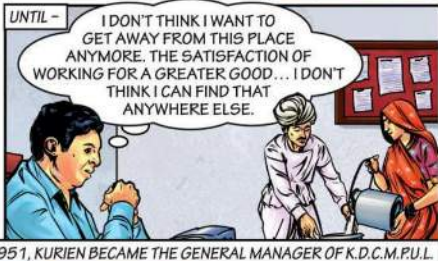
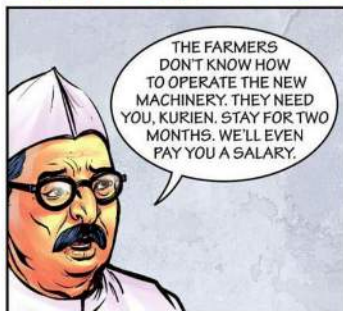
TRIBHUVANBHAI, A NEW ENGINEER FELLOW HAS COME TO WORK AT THE GOVERNMENT CREAMERY NEXT DOOR. HE'S A 'FOREIGN-RETURN'. THEY SAY, MAYBE HE CAN HELP US.

HMM... LET ME SPEAK WITH HIM.





JUST AS THE MACHINE WAS ABOUT TO ARRIVE -



BY 1952, MILK COLLECTION HAD GROWN FROM 200 LITRES IN A DAY TO 20,000 LITRES! MILK WAS NOW TRANSPORTED FROM KAIRA TO BOMBAY IN INSULATED VANS.

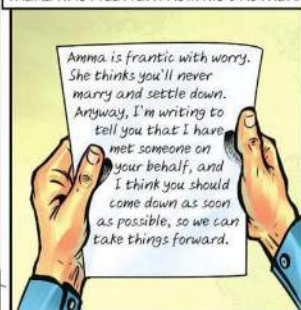


THE COOPERATIVE IS GROWING BY LEAPS AND BOUNDS! WE WILL SOON NEED A NEW DAIRY.

AND I NEED TO LEARN MORE ABOUT DAIRYING IF I'M TO MANAGE THIS PLACE PROPERLY.

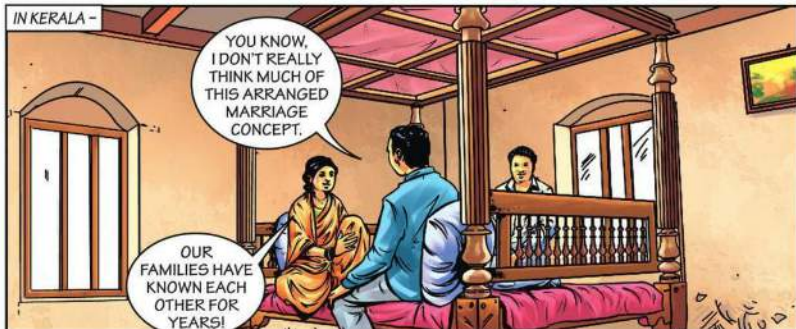
FOLLOWING KURIÉN'S REQUEST, THE GOVERNMENT SENT HIM TO NEW ZEALAND FOR FIVE MONTHS FOR TRAINING IN DAIRY ENGINEERING.

KURIÉN WAS BURSTING WITH PLANS WHEN HE GOT BACK FROM HIS TRAINING, BUT BEFORE HE COULD START WORK, THERE WAS A LETTER FROM HIS BROTHER.



Anma is frantic with worry. She thinks you'll never marry and settle down. Anyway, I'm writing to tell you that I have met someone on your behalf, and I think you should come down as soon as possible, so we can take things forward.

IN KERALA -



YOU KNOW, I DON'T REALLY THINK MUCH OF THIS ARRANGED MARRIAGE CONCEPT.

OUR FAMILIES HAVE KNOWN EACH OTHER FOR YEARS!



BUT I'VE NEVER MET HER! BESIDES, WHO'D LIKE TO LIVE WITH ME IN A PLACE LIKE ANAND!

OH, JUST TALK TO HER ONCE.

KURIÉN WAS INTRODUCED TO MOLLY. THE COUPLE WAS LEFT 'ALONE' TO TALK AND GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER.





AFTER SOME TIME -



KURIEN AND MOLLY WENT BACK TO ANAND THE DAY THEY WERE WED.



MOLLY FOUND A FRIEND IN MANIBEN, SARDAR PATEL'S DAUGHTER. MANIBEN WAS FOND OF KURIEN, AND GREATLY INTERESTED IN THE WORKINGS OF THE COOPERATIVE.

MOLLY, YOU MUST REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE ONLY HIS SECOND WIFE. HE WAS ALREADY MARRIED TO THE DAIRY WHEN YOU WALKED INTO HIS LIFE!

HA HA! YOU ARE QUITE RIGHT.



ALL THE CREDIT GOES TO YOU, DALAYA. THEN AGAIN, YOU ARE A YADAVA. YOU BELONG TO KRISHNA'S CLAN. MILK FARMING IS IN YOUR BLOOD!



HA HA, TRUE!

THE ACHIEVEMENT WAS A BIG LANDMARK IN INDIA'S DAIRY HISTORY, BECAUSE UNLIKE WESTERN NATIONS, MOST OF THE MILK IN INDIA CAME FROM BUFFALOES, NOT COWS. TILL THAT TIME, DAIRY EXPERTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD HAD INSISTED THAT POWDER COULD NOT BE MADE FROM BUFFALO MILK!

WITH UNICEF'S HELP, KAIRA UNION WAS ALL SET TO BUILD A NEW DAIRY IN ANAND. DR RAJENDRA PRASAD, THE THEN-PRESIDENT OF INDIA, WAS CALLED TO PLACE THE FOUNDATION STONE OF THE PLANT.

A MOUSE! THAT IS AN EXCELLENT SIGN. THE MOUSE IS THE VEHICLE OF LORD GANESHA, THE REMOVER OF OBSTACLES.



DURING THAT PERIOD, ANOTHER PERSON, H.M. DALAYA, JOINED THE DAIRY REVOLUTION IN KAIRA.

TRIBHUVANDASJI, MEET MY FRIEND AND CLASSMATE FROM THE STATES, DALAYA. HE IS A DAIRY EXPERT. HE WILL BE A GREAT ASSET TO US.

IT IS GOOD OF YOU TO JOIN US.



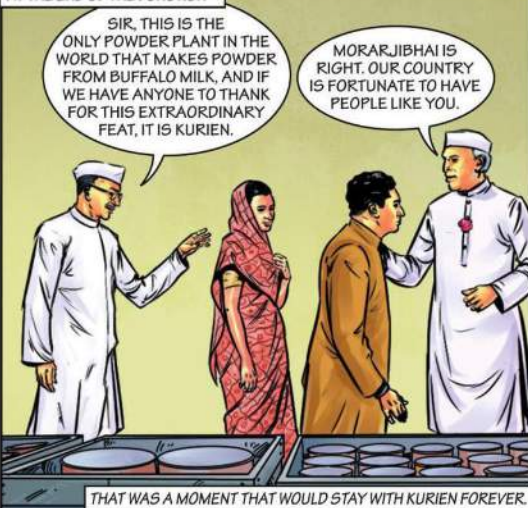
TOGETHER, KURIEN AND DALAYA ACHIEVED THE IMPOSSIBLE.



THE PLANT WAS BUILT IN A YEAR. THE THEN-PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA, JAWAHARLAL NEHRU, CAME TO INAUGURATE IT, ALONG WITH HIS DAUGHTER, INDIRA.



AT THE END OF THE FUNCTION -



THE DAIRY BEGAN TO GROW. ONE DAY -



NEXT DAY -



ONE EVENING, WHEN KURIEN WAS VISITING HIS BROTHER-IN-LAW, K.M. PHILIP, WHO HAD A TEA AND COFFEE COMPANY -

KURIEN, WHY HAVEN'T YOU THOUGHT OF A BRAND NAME YET? HOW COME YOU HAVE LEFT OUT SUCH AN IMPORTANT ASPECT AS MARKETING AND ADVERTISING?

HMM... YOU ARE RIGHT. I HADN'T GIVEN MUCH THOUGHT TO THAT.

A MEETING WAS HELD. MANY NAMES WERE SUGGESTED.

LET'S AVOID WESTERN NAMES. WE NEED SOMETHING THAT TELLS THE PEOPLE THAT OUR PRODUCT IS TRULY INDIAN.

BUT WESTERN SELLS! LOOK AT POLSON.

OH FORGET POLSON! WE'RE GOING TO PUT HIM OUT OF BUSINESS, REMEMBER?

HMM... HOW ABOUT THIS NAME - 'AMULYA'. ONE OF OUR CHEMISTS HAS SUGGESTED IT.

IT MEANS PRICELESS. I THINK IT'S EXACTLY WHAT WE'RE LOOKING TO CONVEY.

'AMULYA'... I DO LIKE THE SOUND OF IT.

AMULYA WAS SHORTENED TO THE CATCHIER 'AMUL' WHICH WAS THE PERFECT ACRONYM FOR ANAND MILK UNION LIMITED.

IN 1957, THE BRAND 'AMUL' WAS REGISTERED. THE YEAR WAS SPECIAL TO KURIEN AND MOLLY FOR ANOTHER REASON TOO. IT WAS WHEN THEIR DAUGHTER, NIRMALA, WAS BORN.

HA HA, SHE'S FEISTY, JUST LIKE YOU!



AMUL CONTRIBUTED TO THE COUNTRY'S WELFARE IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE. DURING THE INDO-CHINA WAR IN 1962, KURIEN WAS CALLED TO A MEETING WITH SENIOR OFFICERS FROM THE ARMY.

OUR SOLDIERS NEED MILK. CAN AMUL PROVIDE US WITH THE REQUIRED AMOUNT?

WE NEED 2,750 TONNES.

WE WILL ORGANISE WHAT YOU NEED.

WE CAN HELP YOU WITH A LOAN OR GRANT FROM THE GOVERNMENT.

NO, SIR. THE KAIRA COOPERATIVE WILL NEVER USE A NATIONAL EMERGENCY TO MAKE EXTRA BUCKS.

KURIEN FULFILLED HIS PROMISE TO THE ARMY, SACRIFICING THE CIVILIAN MARKET FOR AT LEAST HALF A YEAR.

IN THE MID 1960S, KURIEN CONTACTED AN ADVERTISING AGENCY CALLED A.S.P.\*, WHOSE HEAD WAS SYLVESTER DACUNHA. THEY WERE TO MAKE A STRONG CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE AMUL BUTTER.

THIS IS A CHALLENGE. HOW WILL A BUTTER PRODUCED BY VILLAGERS SELL WHEN THERE ARE SO MANY WESTERN BRANDS AVAILABLE?

I THINK THE TAGLINE SHOULD BE 'UTTERLY AMUL! THE OLD ONE, 'PURELY THE BEST', IS TOO TAME.

IT WAS NISHA DACUNHA, SYLVESTER'S WIFE, WHO INSPIRED THE ICONIC TAGLINE.

DR KURIEN, WE HAVE A TAGLINE FOR YOU. 'UTTERLY BUTTERLY AMUL!' WHAT DO YOU THINK?

BUTTERLY? WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN? IT'S UNGRAMMATICAL!

HA HA, IT'S UTTERLY MAD! BUT I TRUST YOU, MR DACUNHA. IF YOU THINK IT WORKS, YOU HAVE MY COMPLETE APPROVAL.

THE LINE WAS IN PLACE, NOW ALL THEY NEEDED WAS A MASCOT.

EUSTACE, THE FACE OF AMUL SHOULD BE A CHILD - AN ADORABLE, MISCHIEVOUS ONE. CAN YOU DESIGN A LOOK?

GRADUALLY, AMUL ROSE TO GREATER HEIGHTS. IN 1964, THE COOPERATIVE INVITED PRIME MINISTER LAL BHADUR SHASTRI TO INAUGURATE A CATTLE FEED FACTORY IN ANAND.



KURIEN QUIETLY MADE ALL THE ARRANGEMENTS.



SHASTRI FOUND THE FARMERS MANAGING WELL WITH THE MONEY THEY EARNED FROM THE COOPERATIVES.

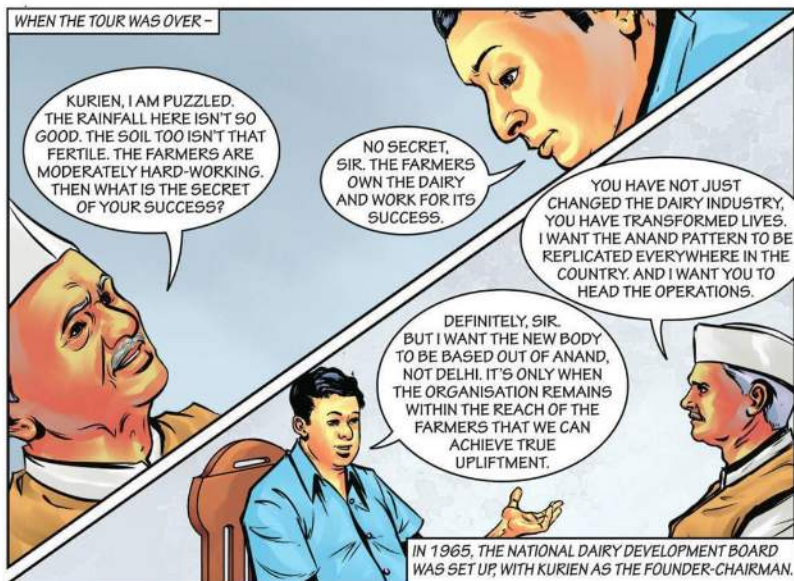


SHASTRI WAS AT THE COLLECTION CENTRE AT 6 A.M. THE NEXT MORNING.





WHEN THE TOUR WAS OVER -



BUT WHEN KURIEN WENT TO MEET WITH THE VARIOUS STATE HEADS -



AT A MEETING WITH HIS COLLEAGUES, DALAYA AND MICHAEL HALSE -

THE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES HAVE A SURPLUS OF MILK POWDER. THEY WILL OFFER IT AS AID TO SOME DEVELOPING NATION.

SUPPOSE THEY DONATE THEIR SURPLUS TO US, WE CAN SELL IT HERE AT OUR FARMERS' PRICES...



...AND USE THE MONEY TO START MILK COOPERATIVES... THAT'S IT! LET'S DRAFT A PROPOSAL.

GOOD IDEA! BUT WE'LL NEED THE GOVERNMENT'S HELP TO FORWARD IT TO THE W.F.P.\*



THE TRIO PUT A PLAN TOGETHER FOR OPERATION FLOOD, A PLAN TO CREATE AN AMUL IN EVERY STATE.

FORTUNATELY, AT THAT TIME, KURIEN HAPPENED TO MEET L.P. SINGH, THE HOME SECRETARY.

WHY AREN'T THERE MORE ANANDS IN THE COUNTRY?

BECAUSE NOBODY WANTS THEM.



DON'T WORRY. I WILL SPEAK TO THE OTHER MINISTERS ABOUT THIS.



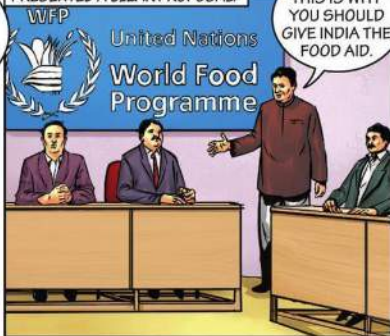
L.P. SINGH WAS TRUE TO HIS WORD.

KURIEN HAS THE WHOLE PROPOSAL READY - A PLAN THAT CAN INCREASE MILK PRODUCTION TO AN UNIMAGINABLE EXTENT...

...AND WE'RE JUST THROWING OBSTACLES IN HIS WAY INSTEAD OF HELPING HIM PRESENT IT TO THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME.



AT THE W.F.P. MEETING, KURIEN PRESENTED A CLEAR PROPOSAL.



....AND THIS IS WHY YOU SHOULD GIVE INDIA THE FOOD AID.



THE W.F.P. AGREED TO KURIEN'S PROPOSAL, AND OPERATION FLOOD, THE 'BILLION-LITRE' IDEA, WAS OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED IN 1970.

MILK PRODUCTS FROM EUROPE WERE DISTRIBUTED IN INDIA, CREATING A MARKET FOR THEM IN BIG CITIES.

ONCE THE MARKET WAS CAPTURED, A DIRECT LINK WAS ESTABLISHED BETWEEN PRODUCERS AND CONSUMERS THROUGH THE COOPERATIVE STRUCTURE, CUTTING THE MIDDLEMEN AND THE GREEDY MILK MERCHANTS OUT OF THE EQUATION.



MILK COLLECTION WAS DONE BY THE VILLAGERS. THEN, AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL, THE DAIRIES WERE HANDLED BY THE DISTRICT UNIONS, AND AT THE STATE LEVEL, THE MARKETING WAS MANAGED BY MARKETING FEDERATIONS.



WHEN MILK PRODUCTION INCREASED, IMPORTS OF MILK AND ALL MILK PRODUCTS STOPPED.

BY LINKING MILK PRODUCERS DIRECTLY WITH CONSUMERS, REGIONAL PRICE VARIATIONS WERE REDUCED. THIS ENSURED THAT PRODUCERS GOT THEIR FULL DUE, AND CONSUMERS THE DESIRED QUALITY AND A STANDARD PRICE.



IN 1973, KURIEN SET UP THE GUJARAT COOPERATIVE MILK MARKETING FEDERATION (GCMMF), SO THAT ALL THE COOPERATIVES WOULD BE BROUGHT TOGETHER TO COMPETE WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN GREATER STRENGTH.

STRUCK BY THE IMPACT OF OPERATION FLOOD, DOCUMENTARY AND FEATURE FILM MAKER SHYAM BENEGAL APPROACHED KURIEN.



AND THAT IS HOW MANTHAN WAS MADE, THE ONLY FILM IN HISTORY TO HAVE BEEN PRODUCED BY FARMERS.





KURIEN WAS AN INSTITUTION-BUILDER.

IT'S QUITE FUNNY HOW ALL THIS WAS A SIMPLE QUIRK OF FATE. I DIDN'T WANT TO COME TO ANAND, DIDN'T KNOW A THING ABOUT DAIRYING, AND NOW HERE I AM. IF OUR COUNTRY HAS TO PROGRESS, ONE CAN'T SIMPLY WAIT FOR ACCIDENTAL KURIENS TO TURN UP. WE HAVE TO ACTIVELY CREATE THEM.



HE DISCUSSED THE IDEA WITH HIS COUSIN RAVI MATHAI, WHO WAS THE DIRECTOR OF I.I.M., AHMEDABAD.

NONE OF YOUR STUDENTS IS INTERESTED IN SERVING THE COUNTRY. THE MOMENT THEY GRADUATE, THEY ALL FLY ABROAD IN SEARCH OF HIGH-PAYING JOBS. YOU CLEARLY DON'T MOTIVATE THEM THE RIGHT WAY.

WHY DON'T YOU DO IT THEN? COME TO I.I.M. AND SPEAK TO THE STUDENTS. IN FACT, I SUGGEST YOU JOIN THE BOARD.



IN THE HOPE OF MOTIVATING YOUNG PEOPLE TO WORK FOR THE RURAL SECTOR, KURIEN JOINED THE BOARD. DURING THE FIRST MEETING -

.... IT IS NOT WRONG TO SEEK YOUR OWN PROGRESS, BUT I FEEL STUDENTS SHOULD AT LEAST STAY FOR THREE YEARS AND SERVE THE NATION....







THE INSTITUTE OF RURAL MANAGEMENT, OR IRMA, WAS FOUNDED BY VERGHESE KURIEN IN 1979.



MEANWHILE, AT THE COOPERATIVE, WORK CONTINUED AS USUAL WITH PRODUCTION ONLY INCREASING. THE COOPERATIVE HAD A HUGE IMPACT NOT ONLY ON THE ECONOMY, BUT ALSO ON THE PEOPLE OF THAT AREA.



IT MADE WOMEN MORE INDEPENDENT, SINCE THEY HANDLED THE DAIRY ACTIVITY IN THEIR HOMES.



IN FACT, THE WOMEN WERE TAKEN TO THE DAIRY PERIODICALLY TO SEE HOW IT OPERATED.





KURIEN'S PERSONAL QUALITIES WERE AS LEGENDARY AS HIS ACHIEVEMENTS. HE WAS A STICKLER FOR PUNCTUALITY.



HIS INTEGRITY WAS UNSHAKEABLE.



"AND SO -

ASHWATTHAMA IS DEAD! ASHWATTHAMA IS DEAD!

WHAT? MY SON... DEAD! NO, IT CANNOT BE.

"DRONA KNEW YUDHISHTHIRA WOULD NEVER LIE."

YUDHISHTHIRA, IS IT REALLY TRUE? IS MY SON DEAD?

"YUDHISHTHIRA CHOSE HIS WORDS CAREFULLY, HIS GUILT WRENCHING HIS HEART APART."

IT'S TRUE THAT ASHWATTHAMA'S DEAD.

"IT WAS AN ELEPHANT NAMED ASHWATTHAMA THAT HAD BEEN KILLED. DECEIVED, DRONA LEFT THE BATTLEFIELD. FROM THAT MOMENT YUDHISHTHIRA'S CHARIOT, WEIGHED DOWN BY HIS HALF-TRUTH, WHICH WAS, AFTER ALL, FOR A GOOD CAUSE, NEVER LEFT THE GROUND."

YOU SEE? YUDHISHTHIRA BELONGED TO THE GOOD SIDE, BUT ALL THE SAME, HE HAD TO PAY THE PRICE.

IT'S REMARKABLE HOW YOU SEEM TO KNOW THE MAHABHARATA AND THE BIBLE LIKE THE BACK OF YOUR HAND WHEN YOU CLAIM TO BE AN ATHEIST!

HE LOVED HIS COUNTRY WITH A MAD PASSION.

DADA, WHO DO YOU THINK WILL WIN THE MATCH?

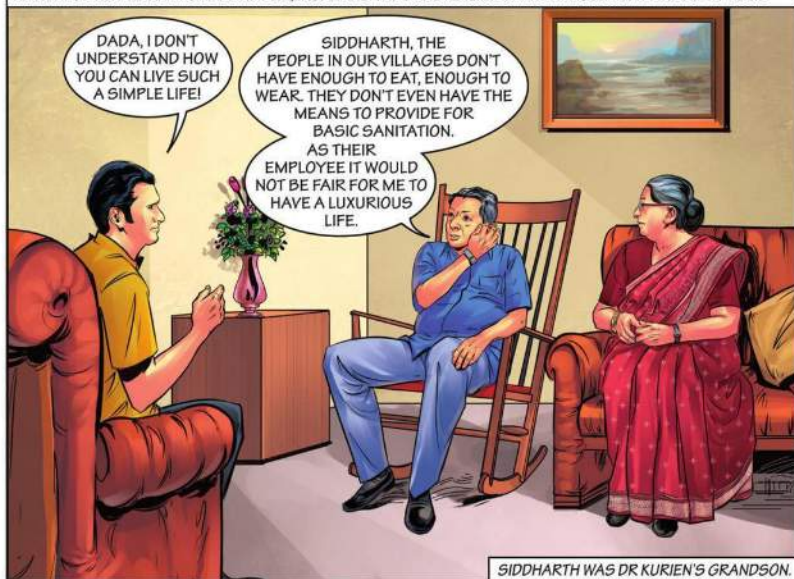
UH, CAN'T YOU SEE THEY'RE LOSING?

INDIA, OF COURSE!

WE'LL STILL WIN.



EVEN AFTER DEDICATING DECADES OF HIS LIFE TO THE CAUSE OF THE DAIRY FARMERS, AND WINNING NUMEROUS NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL AWARDS, INCLUDING THE PRESTIGIOUS RAMON MAGSAYSAY AWARD IN 1963 -



PADMA VIBHUSHAN YERGHESSE KURIEN PASSED AWAY AT THE AGE OF 90 AFTER A BRIEF ILLNESS, LEAVING BEHIND A VOID THAT CAN PERHAPS NEVER BE FILLED. HIS GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT, HE SAID, WAS THAT HE MANAGED TO GET A HARLIJAN, A BRAHMIN AND A WOMAN TO STAND IN THE SAME QUEUE. HIS TRIUMPHS CANNOT BE CONTAINED IN A HANDFUL OF PAGES. IT IS ENOUGH TO SAY THAT HIS LIFE ITSELF IS AN EXAMPLE, A LESSON... IN HOW TO DREAM, HOW TO LIVE.



# VERGHESE KURIEN

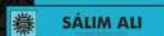
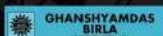
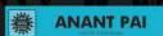
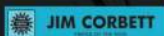
VISIONARIES

When Verghease Kurien stepped down from the train and on to the dusty platform in Anand, Gujarat, on May 13, 1949, little did he know that his life was going to change unimaginably. Waiting for him was not just his own destiny but that of thousands of small, marginalised farmers who, until then, had only known exploitation and deprivation.

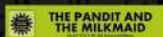
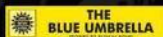
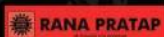
The story of Dr Kurien is the story of Amul. It is the story of Operation Flood, the 'billion-litre idea' that set India on the top of the world map for milk production. A die-hard patriot, Kurien was committed to the cooperative cause. He put the milk industry in the hands of the farmers, believing firmly that with ownership would come responsibility and great success. And he was right.

Amar Chitra Katha traces the story of the man who is known as the 'Father of the White Revolution'.

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